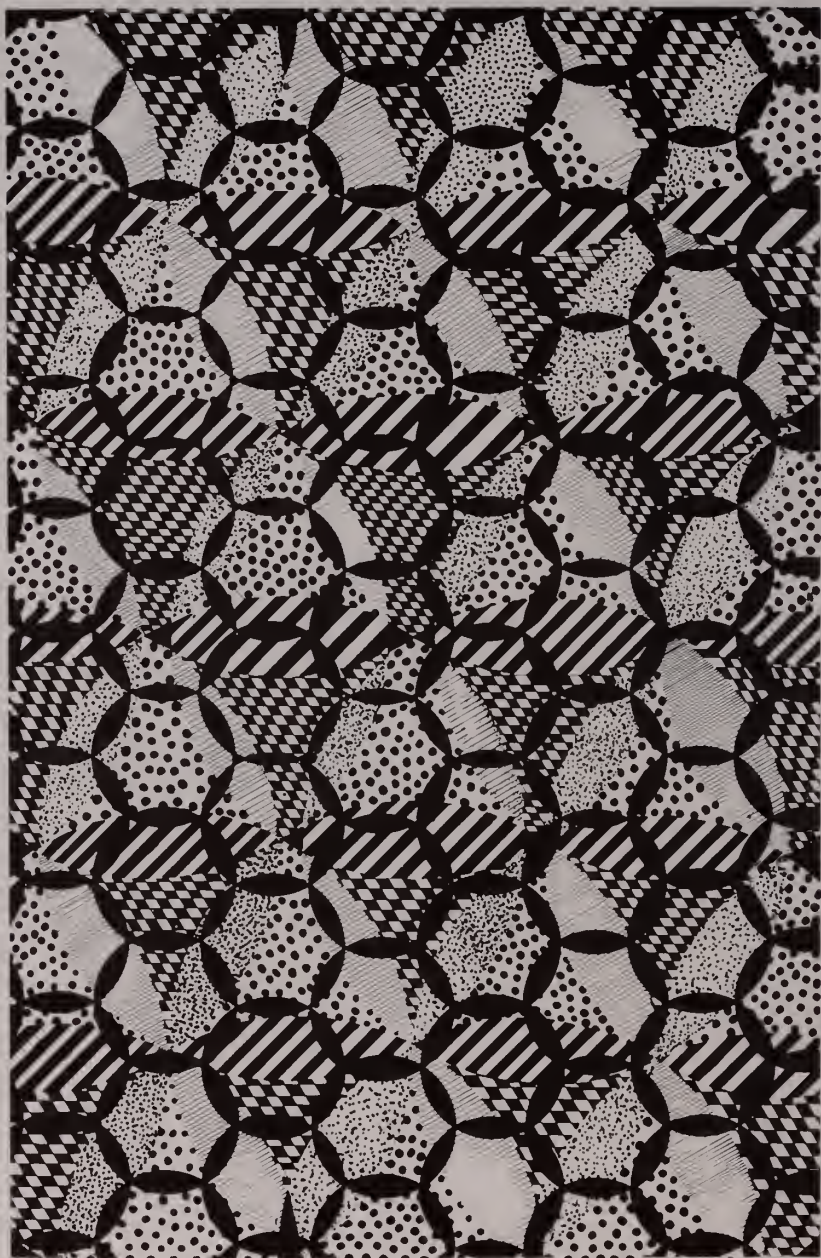




*Calvert*  
*Fall '85*

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## Mach Mich Zum Wachter Deiner Weiten

---

Make me the watchman on the tower,  
make me the listener of wind at the stone.  
Let the land open like open water  
where the mouth of the river is all searchlights and fires,  
where the silver boats are broken.

Send me into the empty country, the dry leaves white along the road  
into the narrow houses of the poor  
where the ghost still lives in the chimney  
(all around the spar- and iron-work of the trees,  
the pilgrim-follower, lost, at the window) —  
send me, if you wish, as a witness,

O Father, to prepare the difficult passage.

—*Stanley Plumly*  
*after Rilke*





*Carl Bower*

# Your Shotguns

---

Your shotguns rested high on the wall  
where my little arms could not stretch.  
My visions of Jesse and Billy in vain.

Sunday afternoons, TV aglow,  
you and I watched  
the Great Sportsmen of America,  
those grinning men  
unshaven, chewing tobacco,  
speaking strange Southern twangs,  
preaching six-point stag sermons between the trees.

How wonderful to pump the gun,  
to cock the eye, glare through the sights  
down the steel barrel,  
hard wood-butt jammed in the pit of the arm,  
finger patiently perched  
ready to pull.

One day you and the guns were gone.  
Oh boy, I thought, Daddy's gone shooting.

At twilight you returned,  
tossed a silly orange cap on my head,  
rested the big 12 guage at last in my arms.  
You grinned, spat a wad, popped open the trunk,  
said — Lookey here son.  
On tiptoe, I strained to see what was hid,  
a savage grizzly or deadly outlaw.

Then, you yanked up and turned toward me  
six bloodstained bunnies  
twine-bound together at the ears.

—Kevin Sterling



Indisguise

*Mike James*



Gravestone

*Amy Laura Aycock*

# Daddy's Girl

---

The thing I remember the most about my friend Jenny is that she wanted to be loved. Desperately. I could see it in the things she did: the low-cut dresses she wore, the way she let any man buy her a drink, her willingness to comply with the wishes of others at the expense of her own desires, and especially in the way that she always tried to take care of me. I didn't need it, but I let her do it. I guess that the only way she thought that a person gained love was through the tangible, or through the commission of good deeds.

Jenny was curiously, but undeniably, attractive. She was two inches shorter than I, but weighed 15 pounds more. It was all in those places that mattered. She had large, full breasts, a tiny waist, and wide, curving hips with a flat abdomen. When she walked, it seemed that only her torso and feet moved; it was more of an enhanced glide. Her hair was brown at the root, but one half of an inch up it turned blond of its own accord no matter what the season. She smiled wide under blue eyes and her lips always glistened; she had a gap between her two front teeth. Men's eyes followed her with critically approving glances. Men followed her when she called.

I first met her in high school. I knew her by reputation: the prettiest girl, the biggest heartbreaker. We had art class together senior year, and I sat beside her. The teacher was fairly young, and was one of those we referred to as "cool"; she let us talk while we drew. Jenny spoke to me first. She talked about mostly movies and clothes: inane, harmless things. When she smiled, I saw the gap in her teeth, also harmless and inane. I began to talk to her too, but it was never serious. We never talked about intense joy, or intense pain, nor did we speak of those things we knew caused us, those terrible past things for which I lie awake at night in sweat and tears. They will come back, repeat themselves. Like Daddy. Still, I became one of Jenny's few female friends.

When time to enroll in college came, Jenny talked me into going to the state school. Jenny's family had only enough money for her to attend a state college. I had never entertained the possibility of attending anything but a private college. Daddy had left me a trust, specifically for my college education. It was enough for Notre Dame or Boston, and I wanted to go to a school where my education would mean something. But Jenny said, "You never do anything exciting. You always want to know what's going to happen every single minute. If you go to one of those places, you know that you will go to classes and study and meet normal people, and even people who will get you a boring office job after you graduate. You won't live. It won't be like it is now. And you won't have any real friends there. Anyway, we can be roommates."



It was true that I wanted to be safe. I never wanted to cut anything out for myself. I simply wanted to fit in where the template was already made. But, I think that Jenny needed me to be with her, I heard that urgency behind the patina of enthusiasm in her voice; and I wanted to share with someone. So, much to the chagrin of my mother, I chose to go to school with Jenny. Jenny even talked to my mother to make it better. She explained, in that same enthusiastic sprawling voice, that freshman year was the hardest, and often freshmen left college because they had no friends and couldn't stand the loneliness. How the hell did she know? Mom liked Jenny though, and finally agreed that I could go on the condition that I transfer if the education was not up to par or if I was unhappy in any way.

The summer before college, Jenny and I began to talk about those past things. She told me about herself first. She told me how she had her first boyfriend at fourteen, and how they "fooled around" with sex, and how her mother and father had come home early to find them in her bed one afternoon. She said her parents hadn't trusted her since. They let her go out, but they questioned her about everything. Her brothers were cruel to her for a while, teasing her with "Hey, slut" under their breaths. She wouldn't say anything to her parents; she knew they thought so too. I knew they loved her, but there was fear in their eyes when we said we wanted to go to a party or to a late movie. I think they let her do more with me; I was sober and serious, even grave. They must have thought I would reason her out of any rash or devious action. But Jenny was past that. She tried to regain their trust. She would occasionally suggest something daring, but often rejected it herself in favor of something that would please her parents. It worked only minimally. I never heard her mother let her leave without the admonishment, "Be good, honey," and two accusingly lifted eyebrows, while her father watched her mother and would not look at Jenny.

I told her about Daddy. His family had money, and wanted him to do things he didn't want to do. Once, when I was about six, my mother had to have her tonsils out. My father talked to me for three days, almost without cease. He told me he met her his first day at college; he married her a year later because they couldn't stand to be apart. She quit school, and they lived with his parents at first. When he finished college, his family told him he was now to go to law school, but he ungraciously declined by enlisting in the USAF Officer's Training School. He wanted to fly bombers. When he was home I sat on the arm of his chair listening to the sinuous curve of his voice, playing with the campaign ribbons on his uniform jacket. I used to make ribbons for myself out of construction paper and wear them proudly around the house on my sweatshirt. In 1970, when I was 8, he left for Vietnam. I didn't see him leave. He came home in the middle of the day, packed, and kissed my mother goodbye. He told her to tell me he'd be back soon. As I understand, he was shot down on his first mission there. He probably didn't kill anyone. My mother kept the letter from his C.O., and often kept me up at night telling me how the bullets had entered his head,



and his plane had spun sickeningly toward the jungle, and, nearly screaming, she told me how they never found a recognizable piece of his body. I was so afraid of my mother's screams and weeping that I cried for a long time after she kissed me, tucked me in, and reassured me that he would never come back. But I hadn't seen him leave. Besides, he said he was coming back. Jenny cried when I told her this. I didn't understand why. He was coming back mangled and burned to me, not to her.

In September we moved onto campus together, into a small but otherwise adequate room. We didn't divide the room. Jenny liked it that way. The only thing that was hers and mine separately was the closet. I wanted it that way. Jenny wore low-cut tops, allowing the swell of her breasts to precede her, to be the first experience of her. I can remember her rouging each breast before going out, even if it wasn't a date, but only to a bar with me. She adorned each breast, as if each was a face to be presented before her own. Her parents weren't there to censure; she was free to dress as she pleased. Her breasts were full, and undulated gracefully, not jerkily, with her movements. She must have practised how to move, just so that every motion would result in a sultry shift of her flesh.

I, on the other hand, have had to live flat-chestedly. Oh, she told me my chest was small and sweet, the kind she sometimes wished she had, but I knew she was patronizing me. She didn't envy me; she pitied me.

I remember one night in particular.

We were going to Sly's, a night club about a mile from campus that catered to college kids.

"How does this look?" she asked. She asked me this while twisting her torso side to side slowly, hands on her hips pulling the magenta sweater she wore taut over her body.

"Sexy," I replied. As always. She smiled and said, "Is that what you're wearing? You know, you'd look adorable in my green silk blouse." She was always dressing me up in her clothes. She grabbed my hand and impelled me to the mirror. She placed the blouse against my chest. "See?" I was supposed to exude gratitude for these generous impulses? It looked fine against my brown hair, and I have green eyes, but few people notice that. It even looked good.

"OK. Thanks," I said. I went into the small bathroom attached to our room to change. She could take off her clothes in front of me. She could even examine her breasts for imperfections while I was in the room. I never took off more than a belt or sweater or unbuttoned my blouse in front of her. I knew she'd evaluate me in her mind, sum up my shortcomings, assure herself that she was more beautiful than I.

We sat at Sly's for a half hour before some guys came up.

"You ladies look lonely over here. Need some company?"

I had told Jenny many times that I hated this. Hated men inviting themselves over and hated Jenny allowing them to intrude. She always said they bought

drinks and it was nice to have someone else to laugh with, that she saw nothing wrong with it. I said that they only wanted her body and that I found it offensive. She never stopped asking them to sit down, though. This need of hers.

This pair was Dan and Gene. Both were dressed in lumberjack shirts and jeans. Gene sat by Jenny and Dan by me after Jenny had replied, "Sure. Sit down. We could use some company."

I glowered at her and resolved to maintain a sullen reticence during their stay. Soon enough, Dan had his hand on my leg even though I had barely replied to anything he said and even tried a little sarcasm towards both of them. Maybe he thought I was shy. Gene was laughing and nosing Jenny's face from time to time, intimating things into her ear. Dan seemed to want to follow his lead. I stood up.

"Jenny, I have to go to the ladies' room. Want to come?" I stared at her and nodded minutely as I said each word slowly and clearly. She looked into my face for a moment before replying, "Yeah, sure."

Once inside, I threw my purse on the vanity top and turned to her.

"What the hell are you doing? I don't like those guys, and I hate that asshole feeling me up under the table. You know I hate your picking up anything that walks by and offers to buy you a damn drink." I turned away from her and stared at myself in the mirror. My face was flushed and the corners of my mouth were turned down.

"I thought you needed to go out, to meet a nice guy. They're nice," she replied softly, with a needle of pacification in her voice.

"They want to go to bed with you."

"They're just being affectionate. You don't go out on dates. You just don't know the difference between sex and affection. They just want to have a good time —"

"Yeah at our expense," I returned with spleen. "You, silly one, are the one who doesn't know the difference between sex and affection. They're one and the same for you, aren't they? Why the hell else would you push your body at everyone?" I stopped. I didn't want to say this to her; I just wanted to leave. Slowly I said, "I just think we should go before they have any ideas about us, ok? I mean, you're not planning to bring them home with you, are you?"

"No, of course not. We'll go. Just wait a few minutes so they don't think its strange, OK? I promise we'll go."

"A half hour," I commanded.

We returned to the table. Dan sparked up the conversation again with a, "We were worried you got lost or something." His hand again found my leg and I squirmed, but he only began to stroke my leg. He stopped only to use his hands while speaking. Gene returned to Jenny's face, but now he kissed her occasionally. When he did, Dan would stick his nose into my ear. I stared at my watch.

After twenty minutes, I spoke up. "You know, Jenny, tomorrow's Saturday and we have to work at eight." Neither of us had a job.

"Yeah, well, I guess we ought to think about going," she said.

Gene offered to walk us to the car. At the car, I got in, but Dan stood in the door so that I couldn't close it. "You know," he said, "you have nice eyes." I knew he hadn't looked at them all night. "Look, our place is two blocks away, on Groveton. We could stop for a nightcap."

Jenny was not in the car yet, but standing against the passenger side with Gene's body pressed against hers. They must have been kissing, but I couldn't see their heads.

"I really can't. We have to be at the library at eight sharp. We were late last week and we're on report."

"You could crash there, you know." His eyebrows had lifted rapaciously during this suggestion.

"No, thanks. I don't think we'd have time to get back in the morning."

He leaned his head in and kissed me, long and hard, trying to persuade me with his tongue it seemed. However, I was not impressed and after he pulled his head away I called to Jenny and looked away from him. Jenny opened the car door, and I heard soft mutterings between them. She finally got in and closed the door. She blew Gene a kiss as I backed out. I waved at Dan, because I felt I should, though I'm not sure why.

Jenny offered gaily, "You know, Dan liked you. He thought you were cute."

"Bullshit," I replied.

"He does. Gene said so. Anyway, why are you so uptight?"

"Because Dan the Impressed wanted me to go back to his apartment with him. What a joke."

"What joke? Look, guys have to do that. It's like, they'll think you think they're queer if they don't ask you."

"Did Gene ask you to go to their love nest?"

"Well, he asked me to go back for a drink, but I said no. I just gave him our phone number —"

"Oh, great. So now they can call us to see if we'll hop into bed another night. Thanks, Jen."

She protested, "They'll ask us out again. It's a chance to have a good time, some dinner and some fun —"

"And then the battle to keep them from our bodies."

"What is your problem? A little affection isn't going to kill you! It might help."

"I don't have a problem!" I shouted. "Just lay off. You do what you want and don't get me any dates."

She turned her head toward the window, and we didn't talk anymore on the way home.

Jenny began dating Gene after that, and though they usually asked if I'd double with them and Dan, I always made an excuse. I liked Gene, he was funny and bright, but I imagined him violating Jenny. I didn't know what he could do to her. Maybe she wouldn't come home one night.

Second semester began well. The Christmas holiday was reassuring for me; Gene's family lived out of state so Jenny didn't see him over the holiday. We talked until early in the morning and went out to movies. I forgot that Gene had monopolized much of Jenny's life that fall. Jenny seemed less interested in him, and even said one night that she didn't think she'd go out with him much longer. I was relieved.

I took a poetry class that semester. The teacher, Professor Eaton, had a salt and pepper van dyke beard and was balding on top, but he was enthusiastic, and I even ventured to participate in class. We read Yeats, Frost and Williams. But one day, he chose a strange, short poem, and I knew it had been written to me. It was Randall Jarrell's "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner." Eaton said it was about a man in an airplane who fired guns at the enemy from a little round shaped place on the plane which was fully exposed, because he couldn't see to fire otherwise. I read the lines, slowly, and I did not say anything in class that day.

From my mother's sleep I fell into the State,  
And I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze.  
Six miles from the earth, loosed from its dream of life,  
I woke to black flak and the nightmare fighters.  
When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.

After that poem, the class could teach me little else. Not Plath, nor Sexton, nor Knight, nor Hughes could touch me. I knew that that man in the poem was my father. He had come back to me after all, and I watched every night as pieces of my father were washed into the fat humid loamy soil of the Vietnamese jungle. Jenny hung over me when I cried at night. She'd ask me what was wrong, but I couldn't describe to her the unholy washing of my father's body from his plane. So one Saturday, I read her the poem.

"What does it mean?" Jenny doesn't have a literary mind.

"It means he died, and he was so mangled and destroyed they had to wash his body out of the plane. He was in a war."

Jenny looked closely at me. "You mean it's like your father. You think that's what happened to him."

"Look, my mother told me what happened. I know it was terrible." I choked. "I can't stop thinking about it now. He looks at me with bloody eyes and then a Vietnamese soldier is washing him away." Tears were running down my face and my voice cracked. Jenny came over to my bed.

"Your mother doesn't know," she said. "Was she there? Did she see his plane go down?"

I shook my head, unable to reply.

"See. It might not have been like that. Maybe he went into the water."

"If those bastards tore him up like that, if they just wiped him away . . . he can't live if he's in pieces." I sobbed into her neck.

"He's dead, Elisabeth. He's dead."

I cried on her for a while, and then she put my head on the pillow and covered me. "If he's dead, he won't be coming back," I mumbled.

"No, he's dead," she said, and switched off the light.

I still couldn't forget that ball turret gunner's death, and I thought about it often, but the nightmares went away as I convinced myself that my father may not have died in fire and blood.

Jenny broke up with Gene right after Valentine's day, which I thought was rather tasteless since he spent a lot of money on a necklace for her, but Jenny told me they parted as friends. Gene called a few times, and Jenny talked to him, but less and less each time. Jenny didn't see anyone else after that. She and I stayed in often, and I looked into her clear eyes when she laughed. I did her economics graphs for her and she bought me underwear with hearts on them half-price from the holiday.

Early in March, Jenny came home late from classes one afternoon. I threw my pillow at her and giggled, "Trying for that extra point, eh?"

Jenny didn't laugh, and I looked at her face. It was clouded and her eyes seemed obscure.

"What's wrong, Jen?" I asked, with a stab of alarm in my belly.

She sat down on her bed. "I'm pregnant," she said quietly.

I felt my stomach sink toward the floor. "Oh my god," I breathed, "when did you find out?"

"I wasn't sure, I was late and...I just came from the doctor. But Gene and I...we were careful, I don't know."

"Jenny, what are you going to do?"

"What the hell should I do? How do I know?" She jumped up and went to the window. "We only slept together a couple of times. The weekend you went home he stayed here. He said—" She stopped. "It doesn't matter what he said." I saw tears on her face. "I can't have a baby. I can't tell my parents. They'd only repeat 'It's your fault. We told you!' over and over like a chant." She was crying out loud now. "They," she paused, "will only make me stay home and have it. I don't want Gene, I don't want them." She turned and stared at me.

I walked over and took her to the bed. "What else is there to do?" I asked, knowing what the answer was, knowing I couldn't say it. I'd be responsible.

"I've got to get an abortion." She looked up at me with reddened eyes. "Elisabeth? You know."



I turned away. "Go to sleep. You'll feel better tomorrow." God, what an insane, ridiculous thing to say. Why? Would the fetus dissolve itself because we both wanted it to?

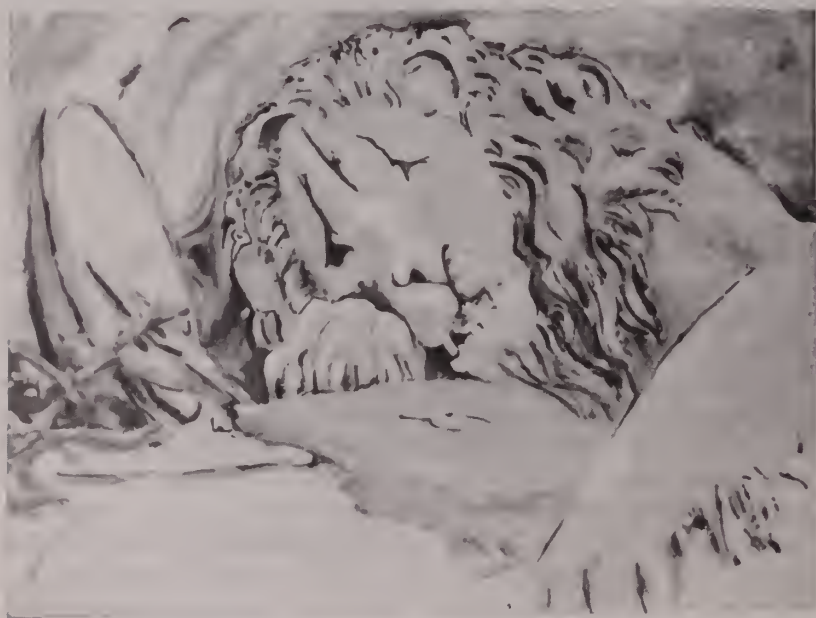
"I guess so," she said. "We can call a place tomorrow."

She took off her jeans and her sweater. "You know, I'll feel better with you there. It won't be so hard."

"Sure," I replied.

I could not fall asleep. I thought of the Ball Turret Gunner. His pieces floated slowly away in an incarnadine trickle of water from a hose carelessly held by some member of the ground crew.

—*Elisa D'Avanzo*



*Carmen Brown*



# Casey Jones

---

Winter the black ice cracked  
across the pond. I heard it boom  
in the night, a traincrash dream  
rode the dark and the engine smashed  
its face in and the cars buckled  
sideways and I felt it falling.

Summer is the station on down  
the line, but see how the tracks  
are only marks the wind blows  
on the water. No train can ride  
those rails with the throttle open  
and the bell clanging and another  
engine rising from down deep  
and we'll never get to summer now.

—*Verlyn Fleiger*

# On Rollerskating Through the Halls of the Music Building

---

Wheeling by, the colors roar aground  
and sounds of Chopin grow near  
like leaves — then leave  
like autumn into the dizz

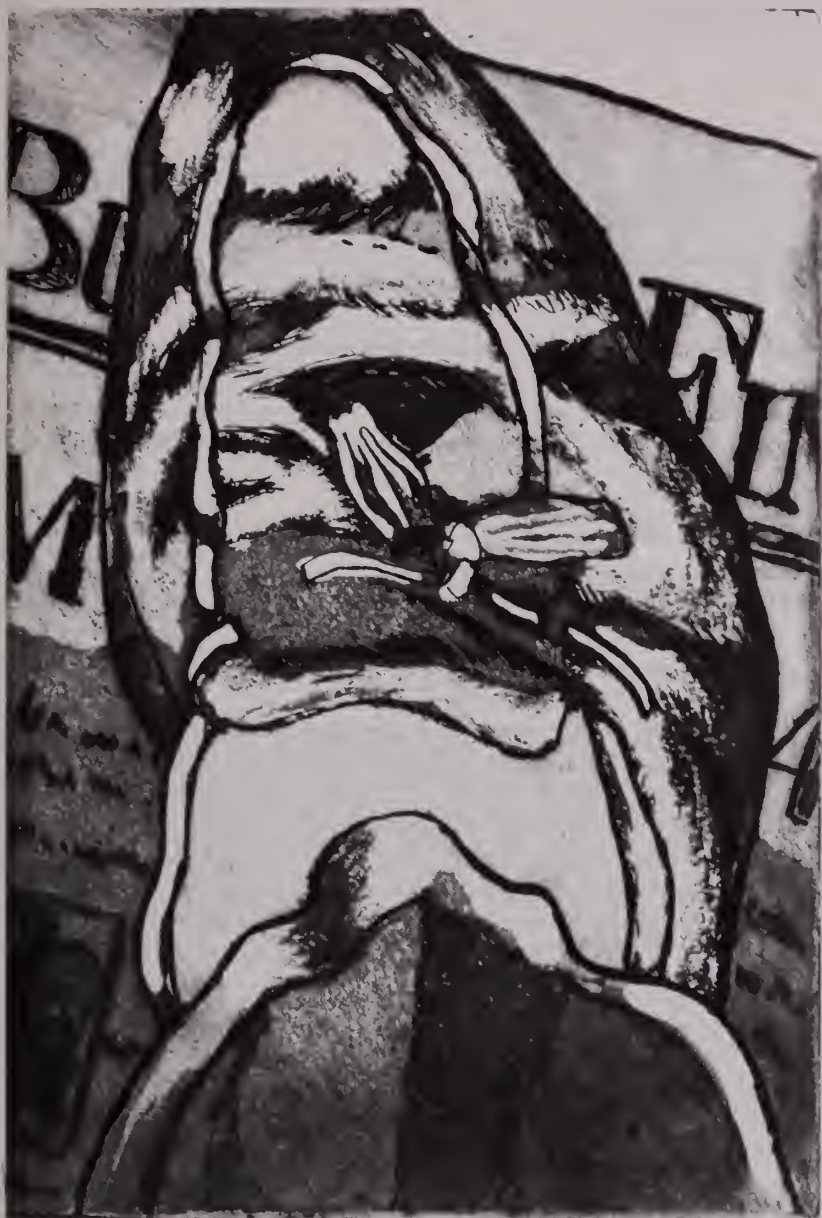
of the sounds of my skates  
pulling me down the hall  
and the wind in my ears.  
Press toe-stop, I'm hurling

The lights in the hall  
become late moons, bright  
as I fly, arms circling  
I feel the stretch of the light

and the length of the sky,  
the unwinding of wheels, wind  
turning and turning again —  
all pitches and colors released.

And look, it's the sky that moves.

—*Catherine Poulin*



1st Proof

*Terri Shaughnessy*

# Lost Names

---

That day at the wall you stood  
motionless before a name unknown to you —  
*Salvador de los Rios Santos* — while I  
walked away, overwhelmed by names, boys' names.

numbed beyond tears, from staring at them all,  
not knowing one. I waited for you as one waits  
for a child to sound an easy word,  
in that awful silence of anticipation,

undiminished, as we crossed the avenue  
to your sister-in-law's car. I said  
I never knew anyone who died in the war,  
hadn't seen any names from college or high school,

but you grew remote and shook your head,  
saying, can you believe that name?  
*Saviour of the Holy Rivers.*  
You wore a white shirt open at the neck

with the sleeves folded above the elbows.  
I remember how you leaned toward me,  
beside the car door, with a grin and the tears,  
repeating the name in Spanish. Then how

you turned, sobbing, and heaved yourself  
against the door and pounded your fists  
into the roof, how in your anger you were  
as tall and frightening as my father once was.

Later, as we drove back to Florence's house,  
you said you hadn't wept like that in years  
and reminded me I had known *someone*. And you,  
softly now, said Bud. Bud. Don't forget Bud.

And I sat there, in the car, aware of how quietly  
you and I breathed, and I thought about him, what he  
had been like a decade and a half earlier, before he went underground, before  
he hanged himself.

I remember the clarity of his eyes,  
their blue intensity, how even then  
his body was full of statement, despair,  
how he loved to talk, distrusted commas, regret.

—*Jane Dickerson*



*Kevin Sterling*



*Laurel Imlay*



# Death is the Wisest Advisor We Have....

---

He awoke with his hands knotted and empty. A whimper—or was it a snarl — came almost soundlessly from his lips as morning light penetrated his dream filled eyes. The bed seemed empty even before he got up, the blankets thrashed into sigils of nightmare.

It was the same. He filled the coffeepot like an old priest doing his millionth mass for the departed, muttering the cant under his breath. Marking time, he leaned against the refrigerator. Bright music from a cartoon shown on the tv downstairs, always on, it seemed to him; they were a bunch of regular fucking addicts down there...a cartoon explosion made him shake his head. The movement set off a sharp pain in his skull and he padded to the bathroom to get some of the Demerol he saved for these types of emergencies. He washed down two of the tablets with fresh coffee, sat down in the living room to squint at the morning paper, and to wait. In twenty minutes, no more, the friendly invisible fingers had smoothed his brow, unknotted his tensed, charged hands, and given him the authority of the Pope. Outside, his car waited. It was bright. It was friendly. It was time to go to work.

There were people in here, he knew, who believed. Some of them were doctors, some of them nurses, administrators, even a few of the janitors, god knew, carried their belief around with them, hidden in cupped eyes, or sometimes burning brightly on their chests, upsetting somehow the symmetry of their neatly cut uniforms. He didn't carry anything. He hated it. The fourth floor of the hospital where he worked was reserved for the real believers...the ones who didn't have anything else to do: mostly patients. This was Intensive Care, and if you were conscious, lying there with the murmuring machines feeding you, watching you, loving you as only a machine could; with that singleminded purposefulness...well, if you were *that* fucked up you had damn well better believe. If you stopped, let that element of doubt or fatalism creep in, you were dead. Finished. He hated it.

"Good morning, Larry," said Mrs. Chapman. Her shiny bleached hair was pulled back, her eyebrows startlingly black. High cheekbones were rouged into cavernous hollows. He nodded back. It was unknown to him, but a lot of the staff thought he was retarded because he hardly ever spoke. He would nod, or smile, occasionally laugh at a joke, but in the three months that he'd worked at the hospital, no one could remember his saying a complete sentence. 'He's such a good worker,' they'd say, 'It's really too bad.' And all would agree. "Oh, Larry," said Mrs. Chapman, as he continued by on his way to the mop room, "Would you go and set up 412A, please."

He stopped, looked at her for a second — then his head turned to look across the plastic desk to the banks of glassed-in cubicles. Some of them were occupied, and these were marked by colored lights and CRT screens, tubes and wires, blandly contoured instruments rising like the walls of a fortress around the motionless form on the bed. 412A was empty.

"Miss Howard?" he asked. Even through the Demerol glow, an ache started in the pit of his stomach.

"She left us last night." Mrs. Chapman shook her head sadly. "She fought so hard. Even at the end, poor dear."

Larry said nothing. He wouldn't even allow himself the relief of closing his eyes. He got fresh linen and went into the room. The machines that had failed were gone. The tiny imprint of the human occupant was still in the bed. He hesitated removing the crumpled sheet, conjuring up her old seamed face again before erasing this last track she'd make in his life. He remembered their conversation, only two days before. Miss Howard had been a hell raiser on the fourth floor from the start, cussing out the residents when they tried to put the IV tubes into her arm and screwed up, making comments, some of them rather lewd, to any of the male staff that she considered attractive, and fighting her illness with a hate and implacability that was as direct as her manner of speaking.

"Damn this stuff," she'd said to him, feebly jerking her arm to indicate her body. Her cigarette-scarred voice wheezed. "It's not getting *me*." They would talk about baseball and gardening, and Larry would go get the nurse when the pain got bad.

"Damn this stuff," he muttered as he walked with blinded eyes to the laundry.

Downstairs, Tom and Jerry were killing each other over and over again. He opened his fifth or sixth beer and travelled on unfeeling legs back to slump in the chair. He thought about quitting, then did some elementary mental math involving his bank account and dismissed it. I'll look for another job, he decided, gotta check the paper tomorrow. I just can't take it anymore. As he got to his feet, he lurched and almost fell. "Shit," he hissed. The room grew brighter, dimmed, swirling (like a van Gogh cornfield). His mouth filled with saliva. Vomiting uncontrollably in the bathroom, he heard canned laughter leaking up through the air conditioner shaft.

Later, the dream began. He was swimming towards a sinking ship. It was night and the water was terribly cold, so cold it burned and stopped his breath, but he kept swimming through the pain, driven by a need that escaped him. It was some sort of ocean liner, like the Titanic, tilted, lit like an amusement park, creaking and hissing as it sank. Screams carried over the calm water. As he scrambled arm over arm up a rope that hung off of one side, people jumping into the sea fell all around him. They made sounds like big bullfrogs startled and hopping into a pond when they hit. Plunk. Splash.

He pulled doors open frantically as he ran across the tilting deck, looking for a stairway down. The ship was deserted now. Left by itself, it moaned as it settled deeper. His feet rattled down a metal companionway. His sense of smell seemed sharper and he followed it. Antiseptic, starch, a rustling odor full of alcohol and bedpans...he knew what he was looking for now. His speed increased. Soft fluorescent tubes lit the corridor as he turned the corner. Everything was tilted crazily, the machines quiet now, their lights off, some of them smashed in the chaos. Bedclothes and linen were thrown everywhere. Soothing music seemed to repeat itself over and over again from hidden speakers. "Hey," he yelled as he went down the hall, "Hey, who's here?" The deck lurched and panic almost choked him....

It had leapt on him with the agility of a hunting spider. It clawed for his mouth with fingers that were cold, nailless, and slippery as rotting meat. He screamed and jabbed with his elbow. It was caught and held in an unbreakable grip. He kicked with his feet. They too, were held. Up in the air, he writhed frantically. Throwing his head back, he made contact with his adversary. Something crinkled and gave way with a sound like the crushing of an egg. Released, he lay on the cold metal, hearing with part of his brain running feet fading into the distance.

Rage came back, and with it, purpose. He set off, careening around sharp corners that gradually grew softer, more yielding and rounded. Down into the depths of the ship, past the waterline, filled now, past the rising pools that were drowning it, down into the water, below it: too pissed off to worry about this breathing shit, I'm gonna kill that sonofabitch.

There was resistance to movement, but it wasn't like swimming, just a sort of low gravity and dim hazy light. He could see the figure ahead of him now. It was moving slowly, stopping to look back often. "I'm going to kill you," he screamed and it didn't sound like his voice, it seemed older, full of a raspy anger.

The dark figure stopped completely. He saw that its eyes were all black, and with horror, he realized that they had caught him there in a reflection. It laughed, and Larry leaped for the throat. He felt an unimaginable power flowing down his arms as he tightened....

He awoke with his hands knotted and empty. He felt sick. Dizzily, he got out of bed and went into the bathroom. When the light went on, he caught a glimpse of his bleary face. A shiver went over him as he met the reflection of his eyes. Do you believe? Oh, yes; he opened the cabinet and took out the bottle of pills.

—*William Le Clere*

# Not the End of the Story

---

Lying on you naked, naked skin to skin,  
as on damp ground in early evening, or at the bottom of a well  
that seeps cool water sweat at summer's dry end.  
The candle burns down low, a blue methyl beryl  
flame deep in the well. In the story the witch said  
dig up my garden, split my wood, go fetch  
my blue light that never goes out, lost in the well.

Deep under me, you breathe out words to catch  
my hands. The night fills up with rain, a soft risk  
against the brick walls of sky. You sleep. The flame  
is shaking blue, my last pleasure of the night: to watch  
with my face sideways on your breast, your skin calm  
as wet dirt under me, to go to sleep before the candle goes out.

—*Minnie Bruce Pratt*



The River at Les Sablonnieres

*Karen J. Kovals*

# The Madness

---

Going crazy was not so hard  
to figure out, once she had heard  
the voices snicker right behind  
her face. She felt their cackles  
swing out of the same wind  
she took her breath on. It was simple

to forget how easily crystal shatters.  
With her delicate touch, she fingered  
expensive patterns stored for many years  
on forgotten shelves. She broke them all  
with deliberate gestures. It was clear

in the rainbow cracks that spread  
on the tile beneath her feet.  
In the broken glass, she saw signs,  
reflections jumping out to hurt  
her eyes. It felt quite familiar

as recurring dreams.  
In her constant visions,  
she fell forever plunging  
into the strange power of shadows,  
where screams go unnoticed.

She could hide the moon in her hands  
and on her fingers count the rays  
of the sun, with precision. She grew  
dark violets, kept them clustered near  
their seed for color. She knew

how distant the ground was from her  
walk by the fervid dance of her red  
steps. She stared into a mirror  
and saw nothing. Under her glare,  
she watched it crack and sound  
wild language.

—Valerie Russell





**Drawing From Within**

*John Consoli*

# Halfway Upstairs

---

The door, stained pine and polished, framed  
by the white walls around it. The oak  
railing escorts us, the wood steps  
carry us to the landing,  
Where everything turns right,

The closet mother sends us to,  
to gather blankets and a pillow  
when Aunt Lotti comes to visit,  
where the good-will clothes are stored  
till pick-up, twice a year.

I hate such closets. The glass door-  
knob's cleaved eye glowed me horrid  
dreams when I pass it, going to bed  
in the dark. I can never turn it.

And brother, when I was ten, fixed  
me with fear — the mannequin's severed  
head he hefted onto a shelf, stabbed  
in the face with a screwdriver,

or the dummy he hung, that halloween,  
strung on a string to slide down stairs. It stopped me,  
toppled me knee-backward, for a second,  
frozen in air, till my face smacked step.

In this closet children hide when counting to ten,  
sometimes never come out. There  
they gather and giggle, a dozen generations,  
like dust and old photos. They never grow old, never reach nine

but count and forget, at eight, go back again,  
go back again. They yellow at the edges,  
collect mothballs in pockets, pray with  
the cricket through the baseboard cracks. The joints in the wood.

I wont go there — again.  
The door will close and shut out light,  
except for what filters  
through a glass knob on a brass stem  
that never never turns.

—Roger Hecht



*Paul O'Connell*



*Frank Forgione*

# Twilight in Beltland

---

It was one of those times when all experience could be expressed in aphorisms. The great gray ring of broken suburbs surrounding the city was a "lousy pile of shit." The drunken patrons of the ART NODE poetry bar were "just assholes getting drunk, with nothing better to do." And "nobody gave a damn." And "nothing mattered."

At the doorway of the ART NODE stood a young man, squinting. His name — not his real one — was Art Mann. He wore a black trenchcoat and a red shag rug. Speaking to someone on the steps behind him, he said, "I don't know what the fuck we're doing here. As usual."

He spoke to his friend Joey. Joey knew the answer. The ART NODE was the only place of its kind outside the city; in the Beltland. The ART NODE was perched upon near-cliffs overlooking a shallow, civilization-filled valley. The youngish patrons of the bar would gaze wistfully at the city lights all evening, while maintaining dialogues of romantic glances, often breathing like rabbits or lamb.

On the steps, glancing down at the city lights just beginning to flicker on, Joey remarked, "Well, as they say, the grass is always greener . . . I mean, even if there's not much grass down there, it still seems cool, if you know what I mean."

Art Mann didn't answer, but sighed and started to move across the black and white tiled floor. He found a penknife-gouged table in a corner and sat down, gazing at the other patrons, soaking in the atmosphere, eyes watering at the tobacco/drug/clove cigarette haze.

There was a candle on the table; he found a match to light it. His face began to glow. Joey pulled up a chair next to Art Mann, ignoring the atmosphere altogether.

Art Mann was fair and brownhaired, with tight skin and a jutting chin, wearing his red shag rug as a tunic, fastened by a wide belt with a football-team buckle. His friend Joey would have been the epitome of COOL — had he allowed himself to be so labelled. His dark stringy hair was teased into oblivion. His face was hard and swarthy, with none of the androgynous fairishness that plagued Art Mann. Joey wore a black leather jacket and a jersey of chainmail he'd created by meticulously folding beer tabs while watching television. When the impulse struck him, he would coat his face with warpaint. He'd shaved his hair almost to the bone last year, but grew it all back because he didn't want to be — in his words — "Just another bald person."

The dress of the rest of the patrons was also disordered — bits and pieces of an industrialized world sifted in through the ART NODE's squeaky doors: priz-

ed, idiosyncratic trash-turned-adornment, symbolic of a generation's cynical fascination with the legacy of their elders.

"Want to go halves on a pitcher?" asked Joey, searching through the debris in his pockets for change. Art Mann nodded and wordlessly plunked down some money. While Joey went to lean on the long, marble-topped bar, Art Mann scrutinized the crowd.

Sauntering beside the oversized, antique, yet still powerful jukebox was a black statuesque woman with a ring in her nose, wearing a white dress and a sweater and acrylic leopardskin leotards. She concealed her eyes with lurid pink sunglasses. She swayed to the undulations of the music, sometimes mouthing the words of the songs. She was oblivious to everyone. She had deep, smooth, ebony skin, and close-cropped hair partially covered by a black beret.

Art Mann kept his eyes on her for a long time. When she started suddenly, he flicked his gaze clear across the crowded room. There stood a huge, hairy man, leering. He was bearded and sloppy. His teeth were large and widely spaced; his eyes glinted like those of an animal.

"Beautiful." Art Mann thought about the woman he'd just averted his eyes from. He wished his eyes could have lingered, just staring at her. He wished he hadn't felt a pang of guilt for staring so openly.

"Why," he thought, "you're no better than this big hairy asshole, looking for some meat."

The man with the beastly appearance turned around and looked at him. Art Mann closed his eyes and slid low in his chair. He opened them again in a different direction. He saw a dreary-looking housewife sipping on a mixed drink in such a way that Art Mann could tell she was looking for ACTION. He knew she was a housewife because she wore a scarf and had ringed, tired eyes.

"Probably taking a break from chores."

Next, he saw two blonde, perfumed and petted girls' heads, bobbing slightly to the music, their kiss-curls resembling tiny conductors' batons, moving in perfect signature. They reminded him of two dandified mice he'd seen in a cartoon in his childhood, re-run again and again so that it was seared into his living cell files, ready to be grasped and replayed in times of sickness or nightmare, nestled in beside weird TV commercial jingles and psychosexual fantasies.

*What a difference between these two whelps and the beauty by the jukebox he'd so quickly fallen in love with!*

His gaze next fell upon a tall, raincoated man with a huge head and a sad, prophetic face. He was sucking down mixed drinks as fast as the bartendress could serve them, and he let out an occasional moan. He carried in his left hand a megaphone through which he spoke softly. To Art Mann's dismay, the man returned his gaze, locking eyes in a sort of staring contest. Maintaining this, the raincoated man put the megaphone — which was filthy and dented — to his



lips, and spoke, with just enough volume to project his voice across to Art Mann. The man's eyes narrowed.

"What are you looking at?"

Art Mann shut his eyes again. "Nothing much," he mumbled under his breath. His eyes fell next upon the on-deck circle, where the poet who was to perform next stuffed himself with wine, cheese, and carrots, in the ritual feast of preparation. Performances went on constantly in the ART NODE, which drew droves of fledgling artists from the sprawling suburban Beltland.

Joey returned, carefully setting down the pitcher without spilling beer. He set down the mugs, picked up the pitcher again and poured, spilling beer profusely.

Joey frowned as the mugs foamed over.

"I couldn't stand this place if it wasn't for the cheap beer," he stated. Art Mann had heard this many times before, and it was true. All the patrons were losers in the Game of Life. Or, they were going to lose. Youth was their great bribe — allowing a sense of contentment, knowing that the future would bring something different — probably better. But things never seemed to change.

Not that Art Mann and Joey were much better off. Their only motivated attempt at liberation was their band — which never got gigs, even at the ART NODE. Joey played guitar and Art Mann shouted words. (The band was the reason they went by aliases — much better for show business than their real names.)

That was really the problem: the people in the bar, especially the down-and-out young men like themselves, reflected their own aimlessness.

"I can't stand band cliques, especially," continued Joey, indicating an example. Around a table sat a group of silver-jacketed guys with young girls sitting next to them, reflecting their gleams. About eight or nine crowded one table, nearest the juke box. The members of the band clique were watching wide-eyed the black woman with the white dress and leopardskin leotards, who was swaying seductively, ignoring her observers. Perhaps it had never occurred to the band clique — girls or guys — to dance the way she did.

"Are your feet sticky?" Joey asked, making clicking sounds in a nearly-dry puddle of beer beneath his feet.

Art Mann was still staring at the woman who danced. Joey noticed his imprisoned attention and turned to see what held the key, peering out from behind his tilted beer mug, pretending to drink.

"Ah," he said. "She IS nice."

"I think she's the most beautiful woman I've ever seen in this bar," said Art Mann.

"There's been quite a few — we've been here a thousand times, I swear," said Joey reasonably. "You know, we really HAVE to get out of here."

He swallowed his beer, and poured another.

"I say we leave tonight," he stated.

Art Mann snorted. It was a declaration one of them made each time they came to the ART NODE and got drunk.

The jukebox died and the colored lights went on the stage, as a stern-faced poet ascended, carrying his podium. The stage area was about six feet square. Fifty percent of the conversation in the poetry bar ceased. Joey watched the poet prepare himself — a typical sort of modified punker with shaped hair and an earring.

Art Mann watched the woman-of-his-dreams, who sighed at the darkened jukebox, then looked around as if for a place to rest.

"I must talk to her before we leave," said Art Mann, swallowing his beer in three large gulps, belching and shoving his chair backwards.

She was moving slowly toward the dim rear of the ART NODE, where the tall, pale, thin, manic-depressives hung out, usually wearing dark shades of clothing in order to fade into the background. The rear of the ART NODE was dank and had cobwebs in the corners. One had to pass through the sullen forms of the manic-depressives to get to the rest rooms. Tonight, there were about twenty of them brooding in the ART NODE.

One manic-depressive female had a pair of headphones clamped over her ears. She sneered at the svelte woman whom Art Mann followed, as if to say "How dare! How dare you flaunt your beauty, your pleasure in life — showing off! How dare you — when I have to be so miserable?"

Art Mann could not see the reaction of the black woman. She seemed to ignore the jealous manic-depressive, continuing on toward the ladies room. Art Mann watched the headphoned woman finish sneering. She began to crinkle her nose again at yet another well-kept young lady — but Art Mann's eyes caught her in mid-glare. This made the manic-depressive woman uneasy, and she cast her eyes at the floor. The black woman entered the ladies' room.

"Manic-depressives are a strange lot," Art Mann muttered.

Just then someone stepped in front of him. It was the seedy character with the megaphone. He caught Art Mann's eyes squarely, and raised the megaphone to his lips.

"Why were you looking at me?" he hissed — yet the hiss sounded like a bellow through the megaphone. "Do you know who I am?"

"No," said Art Mann, stepping back, trying to avoid the man who'd obviously had too many. There was no way to get around the man — the pallid limbs and dull stares of the manic-depressives hemmed him in.

"I used to be a medical professor at Barnard K. Graham Medical School," said the man. "I had it all: money, sex with nursing majors, free nitrous oxide . . . but now," he intoned, "now, I have nothing."

"That's really too bad," said Art Mann sympathetically. WHY WERE PEOPLE ALWAYS REELING OFF THEIR SOB STORIES TO ME? It was his kind and innocent appearance, Art Mann decided, that attracted these people. Even

Joey would moan about all of life's problems to him. Yet, Joey would clam up and act like a punk if anyone else were present.

"Damn right it's bad," said the man. "But not too bad. You see —"

He leaned closer, Art Mann could smell the alcohol oxidizing in his lungs. The man's nostrils flared and his face grew red, as if the intensity of what he was saying would overwhelm him. The cool metal tip of the inner cone of the megaphone pressed into Art Mann's forehead.

Art Mann clenched his fists and got ready to push this drunken fool away. "She'll be coming out of the bathroom any minute," he kept thinking.

"I'm ...on...a...quest," finished the man heavily. His free hand clenched his throat and his eyes shot heavenward.

He paused. Art Mann blinked. Like an eerie, warped version of an EF Hutton commercial, the manic-depressives leaned closer to listen.

"What? Please hurry, man, I'm trying to meet somebody," said Art Mann.

Suddenly the man began to heave and snort. He sank to his knees and spat, then resumed his crazy drama, still blocking Art Mann's path.

"I," proclaimed the man, "have seen an abortion come to life."

Art Mann smirked weakly.

"And not only that — it was snatched away at birth by a henchman of evil — stolen right out of the suction machine. Now — there was no doubt in my mind that something metaphysical had occurred — I SAW IT!"

The man was raving! His face went through an array of grimaces.

"My head was pounding," he said. He put his fingers to his temples, resting the megaphone on the floor. "It is up to me to stop them," he said, shutting his eyes and swaying.

He stretched out awkwardly on the floor, tilted his head sideways, and vomited. "I'm sorry I took your time," he told Art Mann. "I'm gonna die."

He gave a very good impression of dying, Art Mann thought. The very best — he was DEAD. Art Mann glanced around sickly. The manic depressives were delighted. Art Mann noted that Joey was finishing off the rest of the pitcher — including *his* half — but that no longer seemed important. He became a little upset, for just a minute ago he'd been euphoric — entranced by the wonderful girl in leopardskin leotards — but now, the feeling was gone. Death had knifed his mood.

The manic-depressives returned to their own bitter, low volume conversations. The man's puke flowed along the grooves in the tiled floor. Two burly bouncers of the ART NODE stood by. Patrons from the other end of the bar stared, unsure of how to react. "Must be another performance art piece," called somebody.

The confusion increased when the poet, standing pensively on the small stage, began to recite his first poem. Attention soon focused either on him — or on ignoring him.

"Grow Suicidally Beautiful," said the poet.

"Looks like a heart attack," whispered one burly bouncer to the other. "Let's take him to the men's room."

They half-dragged the professor's body through the manic-depressives to the men's room.

Art Mann promptly and purposefully forgot the man with the megaphone and his fixations.

Art Mann looked around frantically for the girl he sought. He went and stood by the Ladies' room door. He didn't see her. "Maybe she's still in there," he thought. He put his ear to the door and listened as minutes ticked by. Not a lady entered or left. He knocked timidly on the door. No answer.

Yet, he thought he heard a stirring inside. Perhaps just the wind from the window . . .

"Hello?" he inquired. He decided to take a peek inside. Even with all the commotion caused by the heart attack victim, he did not think he had missed seeing the woman leave. The only other exits from the bathrooms were the windows, which looked out over the city. The ART NODE's rear wall was on the very edge of the cliff.

It occurred to Art Mann that all the bouncers had to do was toss the professor's corpse out the window. No more superfluous body problems, simple as that.

Art Mann studied the "Ladies" sign in intimate detail. He took deep breaths, hoped no one was watching him from the bar, and strode through the door.

The only person inside was *her*, standing in front of the open window, leaning far out from the sill.

She ignored the sounds he was making.

"Hi," said Art Mann pleasantly. "What are you doing in here?"

"What does it look like?" She turned towards him. For a moment, her face was a silhouette against the opaque pink remnants of sundown visible through the window.

Art Mann trembled. He noticed a cool breeze. The woman was *so* beautiful. "Like Bambi," he thought, trying to calm himself.

"Well, it looks like you're gazing wistfully at the sundown," he suggested finally. She leaned further out and shook her head in the fresh air, away from the bathroom smell.

"I was doing that," she said. "And other stuff, too."

Art Mann gave a prompting grunted syllable.

"I was deciding whether to jump or not," she said flatly.

Art Mann hadn't taken her for a manic-depressive! A moment passed.

"Well, did you?" asked Art Mann. "Decide, I mean."

The woman's countenance changed. A smile blossomed. Her upper cheeks shone in tight nubbins.

"It's funny," she said. "Here I was, about to leap out of a window, when suddenly someone jumped out of the window right next door — the men's room. I

watched him fall, all the way down. His clothes fluttered like flags. He turned cartwheels, around and around. It was neat! He didn't scream or anything, though."

Art Mann smiled and nodded and made a mental note not to mention that the man had already been dead.

"Anyway," continued the woman-who'd-just-decided-to-spare-herself. "It made me feel better to watch someone else go down...in a sense, it's almost as if he died for me. So I've decided to stay, at least for today."

Art Mann gave a huge sigh of relief.

The woman smiled, and scrutinized him.

"What's your name, kid? And what are you doing in the ladies' room?"

"I am called," said Art Mann portentously, "Art Mann. I came in to see you. I knocked. What's your name?"

"Nora — Nora Casualty. That's what I'm called."

"Can I buy you a drink, Nora?"

"Sure Art. A mixed drink."

Art Mann then realized with embarrassment and dismay that he had no more money — and that Joey had probably already consumed the rest of the pitcher.

"What's wrong?" she said, seeing him pout briefly.

"I forgot: I don't have any money," he said, palms upward.

Nora laughed sweetly and sincerely.

"That's okay," she said. "I just wanted to talk to you some more, that's all."

"That's fine with me. What about?"

Why did so many conversation begin this way, no matter what the circumstances?

"I don't know — howabout 'Buttfucking in Hell'?"

Art Mann burst out laughing. "She's CRAZY!" he thought.

"What's that suppose to mean?" he said.

"I don't know — I just thought I'd toss the topic up for discussion."

"You come here often?" Art Mann tossed up, not to be outdone.

"I don't know — you go to the City much?"

"Sometimes. How about you? Do you travel a lot?"

"No. I never leave this shitpile, never leave Beltland."

"Me neither — really — I hate it."

"Why do YOU hate it?"

"Er, um," said Art Mann, on the spot. "It's boring for one thing — that's certainly an overriding factor. Everybody is pretending to be content with such trivial existences — whereas I want to pretend to be contented with an aggrandized existence. Something like that."

"You've got a good mind."

"Gee thanks, so do you."

"And he rapidly returned the compliment..." Nora said in an aside. She giggled. "So, Art, is this what you do for cheap thrills — sneak into ladies' rooms?"



"I suppose you can look at it that way," said Art Mann honestly. "But really, this place is only a staging area. I came here tonight to get drunk and —"

He remembered Joey's declaration that they would leave this evening.

"—when I finish doing that, I'm taking off for good. Me and my friend Joey are going to take my Beetle to the City. We have a friend named Glen who lives there. Third Street. I think we'll hang out there for a while, then move on to someplace else. Maybe Old York or someplace. We'll wander. Maybe we'll become poets, too — and we'll write about the things that will happen to us..."

"That sounds pretty appealing — but you know something, Art, I've heard it all before," said Nora. "Fact is, I've been wanting to get the fuck out since I was fourteen — my parents are real scum and my three brothers are all too young and stupid to think on their own. My dad has them working in the pot houses almost every day. Yet he makes enough money that he could easily hire migrant workers. It wouldn't affect our standard of living *one bit*."

"I usually stay in the house with Mom on the pretense of doing housework. I can't stand doing it. Mom lets me get away with it: she wants no scenes. Also, she's chicken to upset my dad. I read a lot of books and magazines and watch TV. TV more than anything, I suppose."

"Well—," said Art Mann. "I'll tell you one thing right now: we're SERIOUS. We're going to leave tonight. Joey has his QUICKIEBURGER paycheck that he just got today. He couldn't cash it — he just got it. My car has gas."

It was an implicit invitation.

"I have ten dollars," said Nora. Art Mann's heart leaped into his throat. He could not help bursting out with a smile.

"I've been selling pot," said Nora. "Took it from dad's greenhouse." She blinked her eyes.

Art Mann's eyes lit up.

Nora grabbed his forearm. Art Mann tingled. Being touched by her was SO INCREDIBLY fresh and exciting. He had never been touched by a black woman before. He began to get lightheaded — thinking of what COULD BE.

"Look, Art, look," she said. "Here's the plan. I want to go home anyway — to pick up some...things. Why don't you meet me back here in two hours? I borrowed my brother's bicycle. Better still — why don't we meet at the diner across the street. I want to get some coffee. Can you wait that long?"

"Sure — no problem. I doesn't make much difference now. We've waited all our lives for something like this to happen — so what's another two hours?"

"Okay. Two hours. Nine eighteen O'clock," Nora said, revealing her watch. She sidled up right beside him, their thighs touching. "For some reason, I believe you, Art. I really do. I believe you ARE going to take off. Tonight. I think it's WONDERFUL!"

She licked her lips. "I'm taking a big chance, you know. Just running of with a GUY. You better not let me down!"



Art Mann was panting. Nora kissed him, oh-so-tenderly. He could feel moisture remaining on his cheek. He felt like a Boston Terrier. He blinked at her and cocked his head sideways as if trying to figure her out.

"I love your rug," she said. "See you later, cutie pie."

"Right, baby, sweetheart, lovey-dovey, nubbins," said Art Mann. He used the love words first in jest. Love was so melodramatic that it helped to joke about it. Yet he soon realized that he meant every word.

Nora Casualty left.

The door to a stall containing a feathered hippie girl opened as she stepped out. The girl had assumed Art Mann was gone, too.

Art Mann winked, walking out. She blushed and winked back.

He wondered what Joey was doing. The bathroom door clicked shut behind him. The poet had finished his recanting, people milled to and fro — the poetry bar was perfectly normal, not disturbed in the least by the death of a drunken itinerant. He saw Joey near the marbled bar.

Turning up his nose at the manic-depressives, Art Mann made his way toward his friend. Joey was pacing feverishly, anxiously; looking for him. "What's wrong with him?" Art Mann thought. He signalled Joey with his finger.

A waitress with a tray noticed his gesture and silently asked him what he wanted.

"Nothing, thank you."

She walked on and Joey came up.

"Where were you?" he asked.

"In the bathroom," said Art Mann.

"I looked — you weren't there."

"The ladies' room."

"With a lady?"

"It would be pretty weird to be in there all by myself," said Art Mann. "Calm down, you fuckhead. What are you so hyper for? I was just talking to that girl I pointed to. She is REALLY COOL."

"I thought we were gonna leave," pouted Joey. "That's all. I already drank all the beer. I wanted to take off REAL bad. I didn't know where you were. I thought you — maybe — left."

"I'm sorry man," said Art Mann. "I didn't know I'd be talking to her that long. You know how it is."

"Well — it's not even eight o'clock yet," said Joey, calming down. "We can still leave, and be there by midnight."

"Uh," said Art Mann. "I'm supposed to meet Nora later."

Joey opened his mouth.

"Then we can all take off together," Art Mann added.

Joey was piqued. "When? Where did she go? You mean we're going to sit around here until she comes? Did she give you a time?"

"Nine eighteen," said Art Mann proudly.

"Well, I can't wait that long. It's a waste of time. She's not going to show up, don't you see? What's so special about you? We'll never be this motivated again. Aren't you SICK of this place? And, how many other girls have told you the same thing? Come on, Art, be REAL!" Joey was staring into Art Mann's eyes.

Art Mann smirked. The essence of what Joey was saying WAS true. 'See you later' often translated to 'Thanks but no thanks'.

"For some reason, I believe her," said Art Mann.

Joey's face contorted. "Fuck that girl! There're millions of 'em in the City...She won't show up, I tell you!"

Art Mann only nodded and refused to discuss it any more.

"I met the rest of our band just now wandering around, and none of them want to leave, either. So that means we're breaking up the band. But I don't care because I don't want to be in a band with anyone who could stand living in THE BELTLAND for the rest of their life."

"The band sucks, anyway," said Art Mann.

Joey shook his head. "I don't believe you. I'm going to try one last time...You know she's not going to come so *let's leave*."

"Why can't you just wait? I don't want to miss her if she does come. I promised."

Joey put his hand on his heart. "Ugh," he said. "Well, I'M going. Right now. RIGHT NOW!" he proclaimed. He waited for Art Mann to comment.

"I'm going to wait for Nora — then go."

"You'll probably fall in love, get married and stay here, living off your parents," Joey spat.

Art Mann could see his friend did not believe him. He tried to change the subject. "Man, you should have seen it. On the way to the bathroom I watched somebody die. Heart attack. He was a really strange old guy."

Joey did not care. "Well, see you sometime," he said. "Maybe in the City — IF you show up."

He went out of the poetry bar. Art Mann followed. He caught Joey's arm, and they stood looking at each other on the steps.

"How are you going to get there?" asked Art Mann.

"Hitchhike."

A warm smile from Art Mann had no effect. Joey had assumed the practiced, cool, malevolent expression that could survive the funniest, most endearing smiles. Art Mann had joked that it could even survive an orgasm. Yet, at Joey's whim, the expression would disappear and he would look as happy as the current god.

"What about your guitar — it's in my car," said Art Mann.

"Fuck it. The band sucks. I suck at guitar. You suck at singing. I don't want to see it again."

Art Mann was becoming exasperated, and began to hope Joey would take off by himself. That way he'd learn his lesson: don't be an asshole for no reason at all.

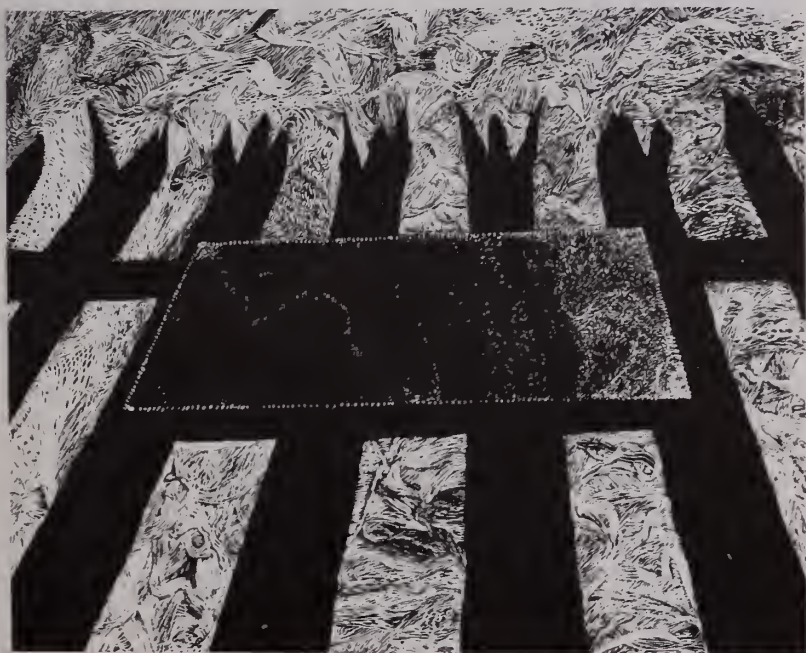
"Look, Joey," he said "You know my friend Glen, who lives in the City? On Third Street? I'll meet you there later on. Okay?"

Joey gave a slight nod and began to walk resolutely down the street. Inside the ART NODE, the next poet was announced.

"Fuck you!" Art Mann spat once Joey was out of sight. He was peeved that Joey didn't believe him. It affected his own faith in Nora. HOW COULD HE BE SO SURE?

"Well," Art Mann decided, "Even if Nora doesn't show, I'll still be able to link up with him at Glen's. Probably even beat him there."

—*Damon Norko*



Breaking Down the Barriers

*K.C. Baron*

# The Gift

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Every spring my father sends up birds from Florida  
and every fall I send them back to him.  
This gift has gone on for years.

He stands in his backyard and birds  
sit on his shoulders.  
He plucks one by one from a pocket,  
a crease and places them side by side  
like clear black notes of music.  
He commands:  
"Sing and fly. Go find my daughter,  
make her believe there's a song  
in that iron sky of hers."

Then it begins. The birds,  
the dream I am floating on a bed  
of feathers. How the ground has green doors  
and little things open them.  
The scud of wings at my window.  
My father's voice.  
I open it at last,  
and even the mud sings.

In the fall when the birds finish their friendship song,  
I call them down from the trees  
and gather their fattened bodies in a circle.  
I tell them:  
"Take this sky to my father way at the other end  
of the telephone line. Make him put it on  
like a sweater, for the nights are getting cold."

All is completed.  
He has readied his pockets with crumbs  
and waits in his yard like a statue.  
The birds come in a soft stampede  
hauling the big blue gift  
like so many squabbling grandchildren  
squabbling up shoulders  
squabbling up knees.

— *Sibbie O'Sullivan*



Zebras

*Mike James*





Impressionism

*Alex Van Lang*



# The Sterling Silver Macaroni Server

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Three years ago at the Columbia, Maryland Mall Antique Show, I purchased from Barbara Paterson, an antique dealer from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a sterling silver macaroni server in the Kirk Repousse pattern. Fascinated by this unusual piece, I wrote to the Kirk-Stieff Silver Company and was granted an appointment with the company representative, Mr. Richard Morrison, who informed me that the server, patented in 1897, was the work of Kirk's most illustrious designer, a Leonardo Hyatt-Smythe, who was employed by Kirk from 1895 until his death in 1929, a native Baltimorean whose grand-daughter, a Mrs. Sophia Cavanaugh, lived in one of the old brownstone houses on Cathedral Street. Examining some other pieces designed by Mr. Hyatt-Smythe, I soon realized that here indeed was an outstanding silversmith and decided to pursue my research by telephoning Mrs. Cavanaugh, who graciously invited me to her house to discuss her grandfather's work. Pleased that someone was truly interested in her grandfather, who she felt never received the recognition he deserved, Mrs. Cavanaugh was a silver lode of information, and on the third meeting when she gave me Mr. Hyatt-Smythe's diary to read, I recognized it as a piece of authentic Maryland history that deserved to be recorded. Mrs. Cavanaugh, however, refused to permit the publication of the diary because it contained too many personal matters, but she agreed that I could use it as the major source for this article.

Leonardo Hyatt-Smythe, born on February 10, 1874 in Baltimore, Maryland, was the only child of Cyril Hyatt-Smythe, a stone cutter, and Lucretia Leonie, the eldest daughter of the proprietors of Mama Leonie's, an Italian restaurant at the corner of Pratt and Albermarle Streets. Being good Catholics (Cyril converted in order to marry Lucretia), the Hyatt-Smythes sent their son to St. Leo's at 227 South Exeter Street, where he failed to distinguish himself except in Latin. Of course, he had the advantage of being fluent in Italian, which he learned as a child from his mother and grandparents, who had emigrated to the United States from Rome, but as an added incentive to learn his Latin grammar there was always the threat of severe punishment by the brothers who taught at the school. In reality, he was adept at languages because he was a good mimic. His imitations of a visiting French abbe, a German monsignor and an Irish nun brought gales of laughter from his fellow students and a boxing of the ears when Brother Thomas overheard him.

Naturally Leo's parents were concerned about their son's future. His mother felt the anguished joy of sacrificing her only child to the Church. She envisioned him taking his priest's vows, of serving Mass, of being elevated to cardinal of Baltimore, of even being the first American pope. But her dreams were not to

be, for Leo was not interested in the Church. He disliked kneeling on the cold marble floor of the church, and the incense made him sick. Mr. Hyatt-Smythe, on the other hand, dreamed that his son would follow in his footsteps—nay, not follow but outdistance him. Little Leo would be a marble sculptor, an artist, an American Michelangelo who would sculpt famous Americans like George Washington and James Buchanan, Cyril's favorite President. And if his son were not that talented, the pragmatic Mr. Hyatt-Smythe knew that Leo could always make a good living by chiseling marble steps for the hundreds of new row houses which were being built throughout the city. But neither was Mr. Hyatt-Smythe's dream to be, for little Leo was allergic to marble dust, and a chisel hurt his hands.

Leo's career was settled one day when Mr. Hyatt-Smythe returned home from work to announce to his family at the dinner table that Leo would be apprenticed to the Kirk Silver Company, an arrangement agreed upon in exchange for Mr. Hyatt-Smythe's carving four six-foot white marble angels and placing them on the new graves of Ebenezer Kirk's four children who died during the smallpox epidemic raging throughout the city. Mr. Kirk was a shrewd businessman, and Mr. Hyatt-Smythe was pleased, as was his wife, who always admired sterling silver but had to content herself with silverplate. Only Leo was unhappy, but before he could blurt out his opposition, Mr. Hyatt-Smythe exclaimed, "Silence, boy. It's settled" and smashed his fist on the table, causing the dishes and silverware to leap up and down and the spaghetti to quiver in the bowls.

So, it was, that at the age of seventeen Leo went to work at the silver factory ten hours a day, six days a week. At first he was delegated menial tasks—boxing and mailing orders from retail shops throughout the United States, taking inventory, polishing silver, cleaning dies, and even shoveling coal into the furnace to melt the silver bars when Joe, the Negro handyman, failed to come to work. He ran errands for Mr. Kirk, and on Fridays he accompanied Mrs. Kirk, in the horse and buggy to the Lexington Market where she selected fresh produce, fish and meat which the farmers and fishermen brought to the city for sale. He was glad to help Mrs. Kirk, for she was a pleasant lady, and it provided him with an escape from the gloomy factory. To prevent burglary, Mr. Kirk had bricked up all but two of the windows, which were iron-barred, creating a gloom that was only partially dispelled by the gas lights. In the winter, the factory, unlike many others in the city, was bearable, for each of the four large rooms was heated by a pot-belly stove and the silver-melting furnace, but because of poor ventilation, a cloud of smoke filled the upper third of the rooms. And in the summer under the tin roof, the employees had to work in temperatures as high as 120 degrees.

Later Leo mastered the techniques of monogramming silver pieces according to the script selected by the customer. But his real education began when he learned how to make moulded pieces—the staple of Kirk's products—by adding the

specific amount of copper to the melted silver in order to strengthen the metal for use, of carefully pouring the liquid into the dies and, when cooled, of removing the pieces which then were finished and polished. Finally, under the close supervision of Roger Beckley, the master silversmith, he learned step by step how to craft such specialized items as trays, bowls and pitchers— of making sheets of silver of the desired thickness, of hammering it against moulds, of applying handles and decorations, usually already moulded but sometimes hand wrought.

At the end of three years Leo, summoned to Mr. Kirk's office, was informed that his apprenticeship was now completed though he still had a great deal to learn, but because of Mr. Kirk's faith in him as well as the high recommendation of Mr. Beckley, he was offered a position in the firm as an assistant to the master silversmith at a salary of eight dollars a week. Leo, hoping to be paid twelve dollars, accepted the offer, even when he learned it entailed working every Saturday as a sales clerk for Mr. Schyler, Mr. Kirk's brother-in-law who was the proprietor of a silver shop on Charles Street.

Catering to the carriage trade at Mr. Schyler's establishment, pretentiously called the Three Georges Silver Shoppe, Leo suddenly became aware of how limited his world was, for he was awed by the clientele, especially the women who were attired, according to the season, in luxurious furs, soft velvets or shimmering moire silks, with Belgium Lace trimmings, shawls, and gloves. Even the white cotton dresses of the young ladies were elaborately embroidered with tiny flowers of pink and blue, though Leo preferred the white ones. In contrast to the brightly plumed women, the men were somberly attired in superbly tailored three-piece suits with real gold pocket watches and chains. Young men his own age came home from college sporting blue blazers with school emblems on their pockets and in the summer appeared in white linen suits and white shoes. Even some of their servants were better dressed than he.

And because the extent of his travels had been one trip to Philadelphia to visit his Aunt Rosa, Leo felt these people were always on the move. With the approach of the hot, humid summer, they fled the city to summer homes in the country or at the shore, not to return until early September. They were off to New York, Newport, London, Paris, Rome, and even Athens and Madrid. Yet, overhearing their conversations, Leo was perplexed by their attitude toward travel. Rather than be enthusiastic about their tours, they were full of complaints. "Yes, Hortense, we're off to London again," exclaimed Mrs. Jackson to her friend. "It's our third trip to England, you know, and frankly, *mon amie*, I am not looking forward to it, for we've already seen all the sights, but Elmer insists that we get away. Last year when we did the Continent," she continued, while adjusting her bonnet covered with silk roses and tucking the ribbons under her double chin, "Our little Sylvester was afflicted three days with *mal der mer*, and with only a week to shop in Paris—why else does one go to Paris?—I got only six dresses, some eau de cologne and three *tres chic*

*chapeaux*, including this one." Bending her head to display the hat to her friend and to receive the compliment, she declared, "But, *mon Dieu*, the French are impossible. Never have I encountered such rude, haughty people. They refuse to speak English, and they'll cheat you in a minute. The *hoteliere* overcharged us, and Elmer said I paid too much for some lace gloves, but how was I to know? Converting francs into dollars is such a chore, enough to give anyone a *mal de tete*. And just when I thought I was used to the franc, off we went to Italy and the lira." Opening her purse to show her friend the Florentine leather case for her engraved calling cards but remembering that she left it in another bag, she launched into an account of her Italian travels. "The train trip from Florence to Rome was simply exhausting, because our travel agent failed to get us first class coach, and we were shoved into second class with loud, screaming Italians that smelled of garlic... Venice is the filthiest city in the world... Sightseeing is tiresome, and I thought I'd scream if I saw another church with those gaudy statues of saints which are truly pagan... If it weren't for running into the Whartons—you know, the Whartons of Newport—the trip would have been a disaster." Glancing at the shop clock, she announced that she had to rush to her husband's office, bade her friend *Au Revoir*, and left the shop, totally forgetting to purchase a sterling baby cup for her grandniece.

Leo enjoyed working on Saturdays at The Three Georges, for when he stepped into the shop he felt he was entering another world. Mr. Schyler had the good taste and business acumen to provide a suitable setting for his clientele. The gleaming silver was displayed in elaborately carved mahogany cases, their interior backs lined with watered silk of a deep red color which matched the red of the large cabbage roses of the thick wool carpet and the red flocked wall covering. In front of each of the two display tables with plate glass tops to reveal the many patterns of flatware were a pair of Louis XV chairs upholstered in red velvet. Silver candelabras, a silver tea service, and a glass-domed arrangement of six stuffed birds perched on a tree branch with silk cherry blossoms adorned the marble top of a chest embellished with lion heads, griffins, and dragons. And above the chest was a large beveled mirror encased in a gilded plaster frame topped with a dozen cupids. Leo thought the furnishings were grand, as did many of the customers, though Mrs. Epstein did complain that the chairs were too delicate to support her large frame, and Leo had to retrieve from the back room a large wooden chair without arms to accommodate her.

Mr. Schyler soon realized Leo was a capable and trustworthy young man, and because of his gout he frequently stayed home, leaving the operation of the shop to Leo. Before opening the shop for business, Leo always checked his appearance in the mirror. With his blonde wavy hair falling on his pale forehead, he looked more English than Italian, though he had inherited the fine aquiline nose and full lips from his mother. Thanks to his parents, who were determined that their son, their only child, would be suitably attired, he examined the fine-



ly tailored three-piece, dark blue wool suit they bought him for his twenty-first birthday. He tightened the knot of his silk tie and pulled the French cuffs of his shirt below the coat sleeves. Frequently he would fantasize that he was a customer, addressing the reflection in the mirror. "Yes, Mr. Hyatt-Smythe," he declared, "I have just returned from Italy. The usual tour—Roma, Firenze, Venezia. On my next trip I will spend all my time in Roma, for there is so much to see. As they say, *Roma non basta una vita*. The Colosseum, the Forum, the Pantheon with its *magnifico* portico, corinthian columns, bronze doors, and famous cupola. And of course, the Vatican." Glancing at his gold filled pocket watch, a gift from his grandfather, he realized it was 9:10 and with an "Ar-rivederci" to the reflection in the mirror, he rushed to unlock the front door.

Generally speaking, Leo liked the patrons of the Three Georges. The majority of them were women, who treated him with respectful familiarity when they learned he was a silversmith and frequently sought his expertise when they were uncertain about a particular silver piece. As a young man he naturally was aware of the young ladies, but they were so sophisticated, so poised and so self-assured that in their presence he assumed the role of a polite, modest sales clerk. Perhaps that is why he liked Sarah Pennington, the youngest daughter of Professor Auguste Pennington of the Johns Hopkins University. She was so painfully shy that he felt like a protective older brother. But from whom or what was he trying to protect her? Dr. and Mrs. Pennington, he admitted, were no ogres but parents who truly loved their daughter. He thought that perhaps the shyness was due to her being such a plain looking girl though he admired her luscious black tresses and soft brown eyes. And when she once smiled at one of his remarks to her, for he always spoke to her when she accompanied her parents to the shop, she even looked pretty. Maybe the shyness was a stage of a girl's growing into a woman, he thought.

Early one Saturday morning he was surprised to see Miss Pennington enter the Three Georges alone. When she told him that she wanted to surprise her parents by purchasing a bonbon dish as a wedding anniversary present, he showed her those in stock, remarking that he had not seen her or Dr. and Mrs. Pennington for some time and hoped they were in good health. She, studying one of the eight dishes, explained that she and her parents were in Italy, that her father, being an English professor, wanted to see the places in Italy visited by English writers like Lord Byron, Keats and Shelley, and that she accompanied her parents because she had completed her college preparatory schooling and was now enrolled at Goucher. Considering that previously her remarks to his questions consisted of only a few words, he was surprised to hear several full sentences, though he was aware that she did not speak directly to him but at the bonbon dishes before her. Saying she loved Italy, she selected the dish she wanted, and casually asked if he had ever been to Italy. "Si, signorina, I was there several years ago," he answered without thinking, and although shocked that he had lied, he felt compelled to continue. "So you must have visited the

Piazza di Spagne, the Spanish Steps?" he commented, recalling from his English teacher that some English poets had lived near there. Finding someone other than her parents that she could talk to about Italy, Sarah soon found herself talking without hesitation to Leo about Michelangelo, Bernini, Titian, Raphael, and Boticelli. They talked for nearly an hour until another customer arrived and Sarah, paying for her purchase, fled.

That was the beginning of Sarah's regular Saturday visits to the Three Georges to talk to Leo about Italy. Fortunately Leo, who was fluent in Italian, knew a great deal about Rome from his grandparents and the Italian patrons of Mama Leonie's. His knowledge of Italian architecture, paintings and sculpture was derived from his father, who, though never visiting Italy, was obsessed with Italian art, especially the sculptures. When Leo was a teenager, Mr. Hyatt-Smythe pointed out to his son the artistry of the great Italian masterpieces illustrated in the books he owned. Nonetheless, Leo knew that his weekly talks with Sarah necessitated much more knowledge than he possessed, and he soon found himself studying not only his father's books but also books on Italy that he asked his mother to get from the public library. Moreover, much to his grandparents' surprise and pleasure, Leo asked them to tell him about their life in Italy. Little did he know that Sarah was also boning up on the subject by reading in the Goucher library, even in a course in Elementary Italian, with the hope of eventually participating in Leo's game of spicing his English with Italian words.

Early one Saturday Leo was describing to Sarah one of the great wonders of Italy—the Tivoli Gardens outside Rome.

"In Agosto Roma gets *caldo* and *umido*. That's the time, Signorina Pennington, to visit Tivoli, about fifteen kilometers from Roma. There you will see the Villa d'Este, built in 1550 for Cardinale Ippolita d'Este, the son of Duco Alfonso Ferrara and Lucrezia Borgia. The *casa*, with its cool, dark rooms full of *dipinti* and *frescos*, is *meravigliosa*. But the *giardini* are indescribably *belli*. Descending in a series of *terrazze*. Showered by hundreds of *fontane*. Luxuriant with shrubbery, *alberi* and creeping edera that border dozens of footpaths and lanes. *Le fontane* are *ovunque*."

So engrossed were Leo and Sarah in their little game that they were unaware that Leo's account of the Tivoli Gardens was overheard by the two men standing outside the open door and looking at the silver in the shop window—Dr. Auguste Pennington and Evelyn Sedley Sommerville, of the University of London, the new Visiting Professor at Hopkins who was teaching a few courses in Eighteenth Century literature. All the way to the Three Georges, Dr. Sommerville was subjected to Dr. Pennington's eulogy of the United States. "America," Dr. Pennington declared, "was unique in that its government was of the people, for the people, and by the people. The two most important products of the Age of the Enlightenment," he announced, "were America's Bill of Rights and the Constitution, which recognized certain inalienable rights of men and guaranteed its



citizens basic freedoms. Granted," he admitted, "America had recently gone through a terrible civil war, but that baptism by fire only strengthened its government. With its vast land, unlimited natural resources and industrious, ingenious citizens, America," he asserted, "was destined one day to be the greatest nation in the world." Speaking more like a politician than a professor of English, Dr. Pennington continued by pointing out that in a little more than a hundred years, the United States had established its own distinct culture, and he launched into a long discourse on American literature, one of his favorite topics. Though Dr. Pennington spent nearly half of his life time studying and teaching English literature, he was an avid reader of American authors — Franklin, Paine, Irving, Cooper, Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau, Longfellow, Melville, Whitman, Twain, Howells, Poe and others too numerous to mention. In fact, Auguste frequently asserted that American literature, because of its quantity and outstanding quality, deserved as many courses as British literature in the English curriculum at Hopkins — a view that alarmed his anglophile colleagues who wagged their heads and wondered if poor Auguste were becoming senile. Following this long discourse on American literature, Auguste declared that even American craftsmen were producing works equal or superior to those of other countries. In fact several days ago, when Dr. Sommerville had casually expressed an interest in sterling silver, Auguste insisted that Evelyn accompany him to The Three Georges. That was the reason they were there overhearing Leo's discourse.

They entered the shop, and Dr. Pennington was surprised to see his daughter there until he recalled that she was to pick up a piece of silver his wife dropped off to be monogramed. He introduced Professor Sommerville to his daughter and Leo and moved to one of the silver cases to select a good example of American silver to show Evelyn, commenting that he and his daughter had something in common with Mr. Hyatt-Smythe in that they all had toured Italy, at different times of course.

"My, my, my! Now isn't this a coincidence?" declared Dr. Sommerville to Leo. "All four of us have been to Italy. I, myself, spent three summers in Rome, working on my Johnson book, you know."

Leo obviously did not know about Professor Sommerville's book on Johnson, but encouraged by the Englishman's smile, he asked, *Nentre era in Italia, ho potuto visitare i giardini di Tivoli che sono fuori Roma?* (While you were in Italy, did you have the good fortune to visit the Tivoli Gardens, which are outside Rome?)

Dr. Sommerville's smile disappeared, his face became slightly flushed, he coughed a few times. "Young man, let us speak English," he rasped. "This is Baltimore, not Rome, you know." And moving to the side of Dr. Pennington, he asked, "Well, Auguste, what American silver have you found to show me?"

As Auguste was lecturing him on the design of several pieces of silver, Evelyn wondered why in the world he was here in this shop. How had he got himself

into this mess? He had merely expressed a fondness for silver — a harmless remark in any civilized society, he thought. But here in the Colonies, it resulted in his being collared and dragged off by an insane professor who talked incessantly and about America and its greatness. The interminably long and boring lecture on American literature gave him a headache. All those authors and literary works! Did Pennington seriously think that he was familiar with any of them? Indeed, who in England ever read an American book? And now he was being subjected to another absurd lecture on the artistry of American silversmiths, when anyone with even a modicum of taste knows that the only silver worth consideration is English, though he conceded to his closest friends that anyone with truly discriminating taste could collect only English Georgian silver.

What really annoyed Dr. Sommerville was that he was embarrassed by a salesclerk who spoke to him in Italian. Unlike Leo, Evelyn had not lied about visiting Italy. He had lived in Rome three summers, but he made no attempt to learn Italian. He stayed at a pensione frequented exclusively by English tourists and he joined only those tour groups that had a guide who spoke English. Occasionally he ventured out of the pensione in the company of one who could serve as his interpreter. Otherwise, he was content to stay in his room, working on his Johnson book by studying the suitcase of papers and notes he brought with him to Rome. Considering what little pleasure he derived by spending his summers in Italy, one may wonder why he didn't remain in London. The same thought crossed his mind several times, but what could he say to his colleagues who fled England as soon as the school term ended? Moreover, even Dr. Johnson, he reminded himself, visited France, speaking not French but Latin there. His mastery of Latin, Evelyn admitted, was not that good, and because most Englishmen preferred Italy to France, he set out to Rome each summer.

At last Dr. Pennington concluded his long lecture on American silver, and Evelyn, his delicate sensibilities completely numbed by looking at the outlandish baroque embellishments, declared that the silver pieces were indeed distinctly American and clearly reflected the taste of this new nation. Eager to leave the shop, he bade a farewell to Miss Pennington and Mr. Hyatt-Smythe and headed toward the doorway but stopped abruptly. "You know, Auguste, when we were outside eavesdropping on Mr. Hyatt-Smythe," he spoke to Dr. Pennington but smiled to Leo, "I thought at the time that if this were London in the Eighteenth Century and I were Dr. Johnson, I would have dubbed this young man a macaroni." Still smiling, he departed with Dr. Pennington, who launched into a discussion of the unique architecture of Baltimore, a topic that he could lecture on for at least two hours.

Later that evening Leo recalled Dr. Sommerville's departing remarks. Unaware that he had been insulted, Leo naively believed that Dr. Sommerville had complimented him, and he asked his mother to prepare a macaroni dish for his dinner. In fact, he developed such a craving for macaroni that he would eat

nothing else. His mother, who always fretted that her Leo was too thin, was only too happy to satisfy his strange yearning, and so she served macaroni with ricotta cheese, macaroni and beans Bolognese style as well as Venetian style, baked macaroni with almonds, macaroni with lobster Trapanese style, macaroni with sardines, macaroni baked with sour cream, macaroni loaf, macaroni with crabmeat, macaroni salad, even fried left-over macaroni for breakfast. Needless to say, Leo's insatiable appetite for macaroni taxed his mother's ingenuity but infuriated his father, who swore that he would not eat anymore macaroni the rest of his life.

One evening when Leo and his mother were at dinner, his father having gone to Mama Leonie's to get what he<sup>e</sup> called a decent meal, Leo noticed that his mother used a regular serving spoon to dish the macaroni onto his plate. Such a delicacy as macaroni deserved its own sterling silver server, he thought, and because he knew of none in existence, he decided to design one.

For several months every evening after work he labored on the design. Gradually the convex bowl sprouted thirteen curved prongs almost like feathers of a bird's open wing. To achieve the perfect balance, Leo tried a number of designs but finally decided to place most of the weight at the end of the handle in the form of a crowned head of a woman whose wavy hair flowed down the side of her face and merged below her neck. Satisfied, Leo took the drawing to work and with trepidation showed it to Mr. Beckley. Though Kirk's master silversmith was a perfectionist, Leo's fears were exaggerated, for Mr. Beckley was genuinely fond of Leo and as the father of two girls regarded him as the son he never had — a quiet, courteous young man, quick to learn, diligent in his work without complaining, and immensely talented. In fact, during Leo's apprenticeship, he maintained that Leo showed promise of greatness, and studying the drawing, Mr. Beckley realized that his judgement of Leo was confirmed. With the drawing in his hand, he rushed to Mr. Kirk's office and showed it to Ebenezer, who agreed that the winged bowl was indeed artistic but declared the Art Nouveau woman's head was too trendy, too suggestive. The pragmatic Mr. Kirk suggested a Repousse handle, thus adding another serving piece to that pattern and cutting down the expense of making the macaroni server, for they already had a die of that handle.

Informed of Mr. Kirk's modification, Leo was disappointed that his beautiful woman's head was to be decapitated and replaced with embossed flowers, but he was elated to know that Kirk would manufacture his server. A patent was applied for, the dies were designed, and soon hundreds of the winged servers were produced and sent to retail shops throughout the United States. His spirit took wings and soared. He could talk of little else except his server. But within six months, his spirits plummeted to earth, for during that time Kirk received only seventeen orders for his macaroni server, including the two he bought for his mother and grandmother and the one Sarah purchased ostensibly for her parents but in reality for her hope chest because Sarah had fallen in love with

Leo, though he was too dense to perceive it, still regarding her as a younger sister. At the Three Georges he avoided looking at the server in the display case, and when a customer questioned him about its use, he never mentioned that he was its designer and quickly shifted the customer's attention to another piece of silver. And so the server remained in the display case, an object of curiosity and occasional laughter, destined in time to be recalled, melted and forgotten.

However, such was not to be its fate, for almost two years later it caught the eye of Mrs. Gertrude Garthright, who bought six, two each for her houses in Houston, Baltimore, and London. Gertrude, known affectionately to her friends as Gertie, was a Texan oil heiress who married George Garthright, president and principal stockholder of the Bethlehem Steel Company of Sparrow's Point outside Baltimore. The previous winter she made a big splash in London society when she served her dinner guests American prepared food — a daring innovation that resulted in her being the most celebrated hostess in London.

Though Gertie took credit for this coup, the real story is quite different. For months Gertie had planned a dinner party, selecting only the most elite of London society, ordering new china and crystal, even hiring a French chef to plan the menu and prepare the food — much to the annoyance of Elver Mays, Gertie's black cook from St. Louis, Missouri, who always accompanied Gertie from one residence to another, for no one could prepare food to Gertie's satisfaction except Elver. But this was London, and a successful dinner required French cuisine. At any rate, the day before the dinner, Pierre ran off with Clara Mae, the upstairs maid, and Gertie, unsympathetic to French love, was so enraged that she nearly had a stroke. Taking to her bed, she called Elver to her side and begged her to resume Pierre's work. The next evening, seated at the head of the table and smiling at the twenty guests, Gertie was astonished when the waiter began to serve spare ribs with hot sauce, greens, potato salad, baked beans, and hot crossed buns. The plates were heaped with food; not a bite was eaten; everyone was silent, for the guests were baffled about how to eat the ribs. At the other end of the table, Mr. Garthright, relieved not to be eating French food again, cut the meat and, picking up a rib with his fingers, began to gnaw at it. Soon everyone was chewing that meat, their fingers and mouths smeared with barbecue sauce. "Thank god for finger bowls," thought Gertie, wiping her wet fingers and mouth with her napkin, wondering how she could maintain her composure until the meal was over, her guests had departed, and she could flee home from England in disgrace. Lady Diana, the front of her dress splattered with barbeque sauce, announced to all, "This is the most savory beef I've ever eaten." Soon everyone was praising the food, and by the time they were eating sweet potato pie and drinking coffee, Gertie's dinner party was declared the highlight of the social season. Thus, the credit really belonged not to Gertie but to Elver Mays, her cook.

Sailing to England the following fall, Gertie was certain that with Elver's help



she could repeat her success, but this time she would consult Elver about the menu in order to select the appropriate wines, for Elver knew nothing about that, being a staunch Baptist who swore that no liquor should ever pass her lips. Late in November, twenty guests were seated at the table, eagerly anticipating the new American cuisine. Among the guests was Lady Margaret, the Countess of Huntingdon, who made a mental note of everyone in attendance, their dress and their conversation, the table setting, and the food — Southern fried chicken, baked glazed yams, cabbage cooked with ham hocks, and macaroni salad dished up with Leo's silver server. Like many of the aristocratic families in England, the Countess of Huntingdon had fallen on hard times, but being a clever woman she made her pocket money by surreptitiously reporting to the *London Gazette* the goings-on in London society. Observing that some of the guests were having a second helping of the macaroni salad, she demanded the recipe from her hostess. Gertie, gossiping with the Duke of Kent about Queen Victoria's reaction to Bertie's latest escapade, exclaimed that she never stepped foot in the kitchen and that Elver, her American cook, never revealed the secrets of her trade, whereupon Lady Anne, who prided herself on her sensitive palate, rattled off the ingredients — elbow macaroni, celery, onion, green pepper, olives, pimento, parsley, hard-boiled eggs, sour cream, a touch of vinegar and salt and pepper. Astonished by Lady Anne's analysis, several guests requested an additional helping, casually commenting on the unique macaroni server — a fact duly noted by Lady Margaret. After desert of apple pie topped with a slice of cheddar cheese, coffee and a German Auslese white wine, the ladies removed themselves to the parlor, the Countess of Huntingdon stopped by the sideboard to study the macaroni server, which Gertie later explained was made by Kirk's Silver Company of Baltimore.

An account of Gertie's sensational dinner appeared the following day in the *London Gazette*, complete with a list of guests, the menu, a drawing of Leo's server and a recipe for macaroni salad. The dish took London by storm, though Elver was amazed to read the recipe which called for boiling the macaroni for thirty minutes, hardly *al dente*, but then as everyone knows, the English tend to boil everything to death or, in this case, to mush. Also, the drawing of Leo's macaroni server produced a stampede of dinner hostesses to London silver shops. As a result, Kirk's had an avalanche of orders for the server, until the London silversmith, aware of its popularity, modified Leo's design and produced their own version of it. Nonetheless, American tourists in London soon learned of the macaroni server and, upon returning home, ordered it. To further increase the sales of Leo's server, now extolled as a masterpiece of American silver, Ebenezer Kirk placed advertisements of it in newspapers of every city that had an outlet for his silverware.

Leo's spirits soared again, and Mr. Kirk, hearing rumors that the Stieff Silver Company, his competitor, was considering offering Leo its position of master silversmith, summoned Leo to his office and tripled his salary (several dollars a



week less than that reported to be offered by Stieff) and promised him a promotion when Mr. Beckley retired in two years. Financially secure, Leo proposed marriage to Sarah, who promptly accepted to be his bride, and together they rushed off to her father. Dr. Pennington, after a two-hour lecture on marital responsibilities, gave his consent, for he was aware that his shy, plain daughter had few prospects of marriage, and as an incurable romantic, he clearly saw that Sarah and Leo truly loved one another. Following Sarah's conversion to Catholicism, they were married at the Basilica, and for their honeymoon, they went to Rome, speaking Italian and visiting all the places they had talked about but Leo had never seen. Returning home, they moved into a small house near his parents, Sarah content to be Leo's wife and eventually the mother of his three bambinas. Leo continued to work at Kirk's, and he designed many silver works, including the first iced teaspoon, an abomination to the British but an indispensable addition to every Southerner's silver flatware, but Leo until the end of his life always regarded as his masterpiece the sterling silver macaroni server.

Author's Note: All of the characters in this story are fictitious, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

—*Harold Herman*



**Hester Prynne's Baby**

*Lili Corbus Bezner*

# The Fourteenth Way of Looking at a Blackbird

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While the professor went on  
about Wallace Stevens and his blackbird,

I caught out the dirty window  
a glimpse of a girl

in inky dress  
flying down the steps

frowning at whatever  
had ruffled her feathers.

— *Mary A. Hensel*

# Meditation Beneath the Signals of the Car Pool's Radio

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Our town is master bedroom  
for the capitol city. Here power  
eats and sleeps. You can hear  
expensive car doors click a block away.  
We carpool farther out five days a week  
up a leap of expressway that runs away  
through broken silos and fences  
to laboratories where skyscraper budgets  
almost convince us that science  
can now every decade or so  
create a brand new almost adequate God.  
We don't admit that we can't  
even build a worm,  
and nobody asks. In attache voices  
above the radio, homeward we talk about how  
our children got this way or where we're from.  
No one is from here.

Like absence of static locking the dial,  
nothing that's seen determines the drinks  
we'll serve. It's August and daquaris now.  
The blenders will whisper over the hedges  
like snowplows up the far-off hills  
or skateblades after dark.  
Such longing feels like some residual good —  
yet how can a mind just short of infinity  
need to kick the cat?  
Sometimes called together under trees  
to offer praise to time at charcoal fires,  
we eat the sacrifice, and stare.  
What hangs like illegible scriptures of smoke  
is the past. It hasn't finished yet.  
Car pointed into its shadows, we hang between  
the spin of nuclei and the evening news

silent about our women. Beneath the throbbing  
radio we really know: it's degrading  
for a woman to be loved by an unhappy man.  
Weary of propping our weakness up  
to confront the statistical heart attack,  
they are letting go. They will not be  
our curved little boats in slips  
that tilt and sway their catchy names  
for all the club to admire.  
I want to say turn the radio down  
we didn't start the lie  
that men are strong — it's older than fire  
and fear, and tuned so loud that  
its foreground has disappeared. I want to say  
how scared we are of missing signals,  
the ones we lose that women still pick up.

—*Rod Jellema*

## Contributors

• Ann Deutermann is a senior Advertising Design major • Stanley Plumly is the new head of the creative writing program at UM • Carl Bower is a Diamondback photographer and international studies major • Kevin Sterling is a senior Film/Art History major • Mike James is a junior majoring in Advertising Design • Amy Laura Aycock is studying photojournalism • Verlyn Fleiger believes you should all be writing poetry • Catherine Poulin is a music major • Jane Dickerson is a M.A. candidate in English • William LeClere has been a consultant to the Food Coop for 3 years • Minnie Bruce Pratt originally published this poem in a volume titled *We Say We Love Each Other*, Spinsters Ink, 1985 • John Consoli likes to express himself on paper in drawings but wishes he did more of it • Damon Norko plans to get out this semester • K.C. Baron is a student traveler, dreamer • Sibbie O'Sullivan teaches creative writing for the English Department • Mike James is a junior majoring in Advertising Design • Alex Van Lang has been trying to remember to submit for four years • Harold Herman is a professor and student advisor for the English Department • Lili Corbus Bezner is a graduate student studying the history of photography in the American Studies Department • Mary Hensel is a senior English/Journalism major from Greenbelt, MD • Rod Jellema has just translated the first volume of the poetry of Friesland to be printed in modern English, titled *Country Fair*, Eerdmans/Kok, 1985.





